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Socialism and Co-operative Enterprises

The Social Interpretation of History. A Refutation of the Marxian Economic Interpretation of History. By MAURICE WILLIAMS. (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Privately printed by the author, 87 Norman Ave. 1920. Pp. 222.)

This little volume has unusual interest as a personal document; not that its service can be so narrowly defined, for it contains a great deal of penetrating criticism of Marxian theory and much more effective criticism of that army of disciples who have outdone and often undone their master. It is a sinister comment to see trains and banners of the Russian reds plastered with huge portraits of Marx and then note the scathing anathemas by the best known of Marx's interpreters.

One may question a little Mr. Williams' confidence in his "basic law of evolution," and the finality attributed to it. Now and then, one would like to substitute for this law some term like "available human nature." But this does not seriously impair the excellence of the study.

For more than twenty-five years the author was a devout and unquestioning Marxian. The reactions of the war and the part played in it by socialists led Mr. Williams to a searching reconsideration of the theories and practices which had so long held his loyalty. He had accepted the definitions, formulas, and logic of socialist exposition. The vibrations of war created such confusion among the leaders about the world that no dogma was left unshaken. This was the opportunity for "revaluing the values." Mr. Williams has made skilful use of it. A good instance is in the third chapter, on State Socialism. Here we have a leading editorial writer in the *New York Call*, reading a lesson to Norman Hapgood. There are three pages of the most familiar orthodox severities patronizingly administered, but hardly a year of war experience was required to upset this complacent dogmatism. It appeared that none differed more on fundamentals than the very élite of socialist expositors.

The author sees this party strife as a result of pretended loyalty to Marxian principles and their total abandonment in practice. Through seventeen short and pithy chapters, he exposes these inconsistencies. On specific questions like "reform legislation"; its utility or dis-utility to socialism, he shows, for example, how the veteran Kantsky differs from Hillquit, with other instances just as telling. The author is at his best in his analysis and use of the coöperative movement in its relation to Marx. A lucid distinction between labor copartnership and consumer's coöperation is made and adhered to. Marx's resolution at the Geneva Conference is quoted. "We recommend workmen to embark on coöperative production rather than coöperative stores. The latter touch only the surface of the economic system of today, the first

strikes at its foundation." What a comment on this judgment is the total history of the two movements! The one is a record of failure, the other at least of relative and growing success. Yet Mr. Williams is not deceived into any romantic idealizing of consumers' coöperation. He subjects this (p. 144 *et seq.*) to most intelligent criticism with fruitful suggestions as to its relation to socialism.

"The differences in the relative success of the Socialist party and Consumer Coöperative is explained by the fact that the Consumer Coöperative did not have to repudiate any theoretical principles in working out its practical program. The time that the "Marxists" spent in fighting each other over the inconsistency between their theory and practice, the members of the coöperative spent in building up their organizations and in extending their influence."

The book is to be heartily recommended.

JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS.

Cambridge, Mass.

NEW BOOKS

AMMON, A. *Die Hauptprobleme der Socialisierung.* (Leipzig: Quelle. 1921. Pp. 111.)

BERNSTEIN, E. *My years of exile: reminiscences of a socialist.* Translated by BERNARD MIALL. (London: Leonard Parsons. 1921. 15s.)

BRAILSFORD, H. N. *The Russian workers' republic.* (New York: Harper. 1921. Pp. x, 274. \$2.50.)

CLAESSENS, A. *The logic of socialism.* (New York: Rand School of Soc. Sci. 1921. Pp. 51. 15c.)

COLE, G. D. H. *Guild socialism: a plan for economic democracy.* (New York: Stokes. 1920. Pp. 202. \$1.60.)

EUCKEN, R. *Der Sozialismus und seine Lebensgestaltung.* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, Jr. 1921.)

GERATHEWOHL, F. *St. Simonistische Ideen in der deutschen Literatur.* (München: Birk. 1920. 2 M.)

GLASIER, J. B. *William Morris and the early days of the socialist movement.* (New York: Longmans. 1921. Pp. ix, 208. \$2.25.)

HALDANE, LORD. *The problem of nationalisation.* With an introduction by R. H. TAWNEY, and H. J. LASKI. (London: Allen & Unwin. 1921. 1s.)

HYNDMAN, H. M. *The evolution of revolution.* (New York: Boni & Live-right. 1921. Pp. 406.)

Mr. Hyndman, now in his eightieth year, was one of the first and remains among the last of the British Marxian socialists. The founder of the Social Democratic Federation has lived to see his own generation pass from the stage and to see the younger radicals drift away either to the Labor party on the right or to the syndicalist groups on the left. And to